B O C A G I A N A

Museu Municipal do Funchal

Madeira 4. VIII. 1959 No. 2

NOTES ON BIRDS SEEN IN MADEIRA, WINTER 1958-59.

By E. J. M. Buxton

I visited Madeira from December 22nd 1958 to January 4th 1959, staying in Funchal. On the Southern side of the island I went as far West as Ribeira Brava, and as far East as Caniçal. I also went across to the North side at Faial and Santana, and from there climbed Pico Ruivo.

1. NON-RESIDENT SPECIES.

Egretta garzetta «Little Egret» One on shore at Caniçal. December 31st. Previously recorded by Schmitz (1899). There is a specimen in the Museu Municipal do Funchal.

Arenaria interpres «Turnstone» Up to 7 seen on shore in several parts of the island.

Tringa hypoleucos «Common Sandpiper» Single birds seen on shore at Funchal and Ribeira Brava.

Larus fuscus graellsii «British Lesser Black-backed Gull». Among the gulls in Funchal Harbour, of which the great majority were the local *Larus argentatus atlantis* I noticed a few with darker mantles which looked like British *L. fuscus*, though this had not apparently been previously recorded from Madeira. I was lucky enough to get confirmation of this identification by observing a «ringed» bird (an immature) which I enticed close to me on the sea-wall with scraps of biscuit. The bird had been ringed as a chick in the Farne Islands, off the North-East coast of England, in August 1957. This seems to be the first occasion on which a bird of any species ringed in Britain has been recovered in Madeira, though there has been a

record of a bird of this species ringed in Britain and recovered in the Canary Islands. No doubt a number of the immature gulls were also of this species, but it is not distinguishable in this plumage from *L. argentatus*.

Larus hyperboreus «Glaucous Gull» An immature bird with other gulls on the shore in Funchal Harbour. December 31st. Recorded by SCHMITZ on January 3rd 1905.

Larus ridibundus «Black-headed Gull» Up to 25 present in Funchal Harbour. Listed as rare by SARMENTO.

Motacilla alba «White Wagtail» Several seen.

2. RESIDENT SPECIES

I have little to add to BERNSTRÖM'S paper published in the *Boletim* No. V, Art. 14, pp. 64-82. I saw 21 of the species listed by him. One of the most surprising things to a visitor from Britain was the ubiquity of *Sylvia atricapilla* «Blackcap», which in Madeira appears to occupy ecological niches which in Britain and in Europe generally are occupied by several species which are absent from Madeira. It is to be seen feeding in places and situations where in Britain one would expect to see tits *(Parus)* or Hedgesparrows *(Prunella modularis)*, running about the ground in flower-beds, or far out on the ends of branches, as well as in the thick cover which it inhabits in Britain. Buzzards *(Buteo buteo)* were seen near the coast on both sides of the island, but not high on the mountain. MEINERTZHAGEN saw them only above 2000 feet during May, so there may be a vertical migration up and down the mountains of this species. This may perhaps apply also to the Swift *(Apus unicolor)* which was common all along the coast from Ribeira Brava to Machico, but was not seen inland.